

Washington, DC – Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) today expressed their disappointment at President Bush's decision to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the US Supreme Court with John Roberts, a nominee whose sparse judicial record and ideological philosophy raise significant concerns for mainstream Americans.

"Our democratic constitution ensures that the majority is well-protected in the electoral system, but often the only resort for minorities' rights is the Supreme Court," CAPAC Chair Mike Honda (D-CA) said. "That is why it is critical that any candidate to replace Justice O'Connor be committed to respecting the rights and freedoms of minority communities, including the AAPI community."

CAPAC will examine Judge Roberts' record on issues of importance to the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, including affirmative action, fighting hate crimes, protecting immigrant rights, and voting rights. CAPAC will also scrutinize Roberts's record on women's rights, particularly his views on the landmark Roe v. Wade decision.

"We had hoped for a consensus candidate to replace Justice O'Connor; we clearly do not have that in Judge Roberts. Given a Supreme Court that is often split 5-4 on key decisions relating to interpretations of constitutional and civil rights of individuals, minorities, and vulnerable populations, much is at stake for all of us," said Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA), Chair of the CAPAC Civil Rights Task Force. "Therefore, as an organization and as individuals, we must do all we can to encourage the Senate to exercise its "advise and consent" responsibilities in a manner to either ensure that Judge Roberts will protect our hard won civil and constitutional rights, or not confirm him."

CAPAC Members urge the Senate to undertake a comprehensive review of Judge Robert's record. They expect the Senate to fulfill its constitutional duty to conduct a thorough, independent review of his qualifications, background, and constitutional philosophy to make sure he meets the necessary standards for serving on the US Supreme Court.

Members of CAPAC are available for interviews today and throughout the week.